

# Solutions Lab: Zoning By-law

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PRESENTED BY:

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March 19, 2025



# Solutions Lab Overview

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- **Naama Blonder**, Architect, Urban Designer, Urban Planner, Co-founder of Smart Density
- **Chris Hardwicke**, a registered professional planner, a member of the Royal Architecture Institute of Canada and an urban designer with over 25 years of experience
- **Mark Richardson**, Technical Lead for data-visualization & analytics on the [HousingNowTO.com](http://HousingNowTO.com)

# One-on-One Interviews

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- One on one interviews with 37 stakeholders:
  - Key aspects of the proposed zoning that affect development or planning.
  - Suggestions for improvements or clarifications.
  - Perspectives on infrastructure, density, and community design under the new zoning.
- Invitation to come to the workshop with an open and positive mindset and to provide solutions to identified challenges with the Zoning By-law



# Workshop

February 11 & 12, 2025

The structured workshops reviewed and gathered feedback on the City's new Zoning By-law and proposed standards, with an emphasis on research, **direct engagement**, and **collaborative discussions** to develop actionable recommendations to create **livable communities**.

# Purpose

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- To understand from the development industry's perspective which standards in the proposed Zoning By-law are:
  1. Overly Prescriptive
  2. Limit Development Ability
  3. Overly Generous Setbacks

# Activities

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- Participants were presented with a large table of Zoning standards categorized as either: Overly Prescriptive, Limit Development Ability or Overly Generous Setbacks
- Participants were asked to:
  - Identify Key Barriers of the By-law
  - Suggest the rationale for the Zoning Standard
  - Provide a revision to the standard
  - Present & discuss the findings to the group
  - Provide any remaining feedback

# Example

Overly prescriptive / inflexible			
By-law Reference (where given)	By-law Official Wording (Verbatim, UNLESS it is an excerpt from a table in which case it is written as a sentence)	Potential Rationale	Proposed Revision
3.2.1.c	If a mid-rise building is required to provide non-residential uses, a minimum of 50% of the frontage along a street, or common amenity area, shall be for non-residential uses, but shall not be used for commercial parking, an underground parking structure, or above-ground parking structure, or surface parking lot.	Provide opportunities for commercial/retail spaces within our strategic growth areas and intensification corridors.	If a mid-rise building is required to provide non-residential uses, a minimum of 40% of the frontage of the building shall be for non-residential uses.

# Objectives

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- Provide the City with the top Zoning Standards that are concerning to stakeholders
- Have participants think about why the zoning standards are in place from the City's perspective. i.e., what is the City trying to achieve with the standard
- Suggest more workable/more reasonable revisions to zoning standards that may work better for the development industry



# What we heard – Overarching Themes

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- Design elements in the Zoning By-law are not appropriate (step backs, angular plane, building face distances, building separation distances)
- Amenity requirements are too large
- Landscaping areas and snow storage requirements are too large
- Requiring non-residential uses in **all** buildings fronting on arterial roads or intensification corridors is not realistic for the development community to provide
- Minimum garage sizes are too large
- Electric Vehicle Ready Parking requirements are costly

# Next Steps

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- Staff will review feedback and ideas generated through the Solutions Lab along with **all** comments received through public consultation and finalize the Zoning By-law
- Staff will present the Zoning By-law to Affordability Committee, at the same time releasing the By-law, white papers, redline revisions, comment matrix etc. to the community for review
- 6-8 weeks following the release staff will present a Staff Report based on all feedback and staff's professional opinion to Council for consideration
- Report to Council is expected in Q2 2025

# Questions

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